



Chapter 8

Education

A public educated on the value of the County's heritage resources is more likely to invest in the resources and the programs designed to preserve them. Public education is therefore, a key element to heritage preservation.

The County does not currently have an overarching public education or outreach program specific to heritage resources; however, there are several individual efforts within and outside County government that either have been or are currently addressing this need.

The County's Historic District Review Committee (HDRC), which is the only standing advisory body dealing with heritage resources in the County, is another program tasked with a role in public education. The County's Revised 1993 Zoning Ordinance outlines the powers and duties of the Historic District Review Committee (HDRC) as including a public education component. The HDRC's public education role has largely been confined to disseminating information on the Historic District Program and as resource for individual property owners seeking guidance on restoration/renovation projects. In the coming year, the HDRC will be expanding that role and working on historic district road signage to inform travelers when they are entering a County administered historic district. Staff will be working with the HDRC to create/update historic district public information materials.

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) is involved in public education through the management of historic properties and their work with citizen advisory committees. These committees, independent of the County, conduct events for the purpose of public education. In addition, the County funds and operates the Heritage Farm Museum which serves as an educational facility. The PRCS has also partnered with the Northern Virginia Community College, Loudoun Campus Historic Preservation Program by arranging for the use of the Mount Zion Church as an "in the field" classroom for a Historic Building Renovation course.

It is critical that the County's School System be a key player in heritage education. There is currently no local history component in the public school curriculum. Virginia history is introduced at the fourth grade level, beginning with European settlement and Virginia prehistory is limited to the time of European contact with the area's first inhabitants.

Special local history programs are offered through various preservation groups, but there is no mandate to integrate them into the existing curriculum. For example, the Loudoun Museum offers classroom programs on prehistory and history with mobile exhibits. The Heritage Consortium has a program targeting 5th graders for student site visits to places of local historic significance, using places and events in Loudoun as a microcosm of Virginia history. The education staff at the Loudoun Museum has estimated that they reach about 3,000 elementary school students yearly.



5th graders visit Morven Park to learn about Virginia history

Many non-governmental groups that have specific interests or are affiliated with a particular property share the task of public education. For example, Oatlands, Morven Park, the Thomas Balch Library and the Loudoun Museum all have public education components to their respective programming efforts. Oatlands has also partnered with the Northern Virginia Community College's Historic Preservation Program and offers the plantation as an in-the-field classroom. The *Heritage Consortium* includes all heritage sites in the County. The above

mentioned organizations are part of this Consortium. A major focus of the Consortium is promoting the use of local heritage resources as tools for teaching local heritage in the public school system.

Public education is a shared responsibility. Formalizing partnerships with other organizations that have a public education mission can strengthen all efforts to highlight the importance of heritage resource preservation. Many separate public education efforts are already established and making some inroads into the community and a successful public education program will necessitate the involvement of these local preservation and education organizations, county government and the public school system.

Finally, the County's public outreach efforts must address changing demographics. Our increasingly diverse population will influence how the County views its past, how it uses the past in the present and future and which historic places are identified, preserved and interpreted for future generations.

Education Policies

1. The County will work with the Public School Administration to coordinate the use of local historic sites, assist in curriculum development, develop new ways of using local resources, provide field trip opportunities, share expertise, and provide extra-curricular opportunities.
2. County Public Schools shall encourage the State Board of Education to make local history a part of the public school curriculum in all grades. The County will seek to use local history as a case study for national history, math, geography, social studies and other programs.
3. The County should assist private sector heritage providers by encouraging County Public Schools Administration to participate in development of joint education programs and by offering technical support such as grant writing assistance and other assistance.
4. Public schools will be encouraged to develop enrichment programs (similar to the Virginia Time Travelers Program) that encourage students and their families to visit heritage sites outside of the school program.
5. The County seeks to facilitate a stronger relationship between Parent Teacher Organizations and local heritage sites to garner support for preservation activities, fund raising, encouraging school use of local resources and other benefits.
6. The County will partner with colleges and universities to preserve heritage resources by offering County property as "in-field" classrooms.
7. The Public Information Office should provide all current and new residents with a short/basic history of Loudoun County, its people and places stories, links to organizations and other materials that introduce them to the County.
8. Loudoun will celebrate our heritage and the County's role in the State and the nation before and since 1607. The County should sponsor, encouraging the support of local businesses and organizations, an ongoing program of festivals, lectures, publications and other means of celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of Loudoun and other significant National, State and local anniversaries.
9. The County will actively introduce local residents to Loudoun's history by publishing information articles, assisting in marketing and advertising events, offering data and coordinating County publications.

10. The County should promote a sense of stewardship and community awareness through programs such as volunteer archaeological programs, and offering public sites such as Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve for public heritage-related activities. The County should use public archaeology programs and school programs to affirm the benefits of preserving heritage resources in place, rather than removing them from their historic context, maintaining them in private collections, or removing them from the County through trade or sale.
11. The County seeks to expand consultation with diverse cultural communities, e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latino/Chicano groups and others in order to gain a better understanding of what aspects of heritage are important to minority cultures and what the County's heritage programs could do to be inclusive in its heritage preservation outreach efforts.
12. The County should be a clearinghouse of data by offering convenient public access to property data, historic data, zoning and other information.

Implementation

The Preservation Plan focuses on creating partnerships between the County, Public Schools and those private groups already active in educational programs. The Environmental and Historic Preservation Program is already working to bring groups together while the Public Information Office has the ability to develop and maintain regular media initiatives. Full use should be made of resources such as a web page, newspaper articles and radio or television broadcasts offering vignettes about Loudoun's history, links to other heritage resources, financial programs and contact information. County agencies collect and maintain important data about property ownership, zoning, planned land use, etc. Through agencies such as Public Information Office, the Office of Mapping and Geographic Information, Planning and Building and Development, the County can organize, and distribute data needed to help identify and protect heritage resources.



Third graders get hands-on experience at the Fisher Site, a late Woodland Indian site in eastern Loudoun